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Spring 2-1-2019

# CLAS 251L.01: The Epic

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# CLAS 251L: The Epic

## Spring 2019

### Instructor Information:

Prof. Matthew Semanoff

Office: LA 425

Phone: 243-5637

matthew.semanoff@umontana.edu

Office Hours: MWF 11:00-12:00 pm or by appointment

### Course Information:

Time and Days: MWF 2:00-2:50

Room: LA 338

CRN: 34726

3 Credits

### Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the genre of epic poetry. Students read poetry in translation spanning from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. Through the examination of these poems, students will explore the socio-historical contexts that produced them. The poems will be used as documents of social history shedding light on a variety of historical periods (the Greek Bronze, Archaic, and Hellenistic Ages, the end of the Republican period of Rome, and the beginning of its Imperial period). These poems provide insight into their various cultural milieux (e.g. the vestiges of oral composition found in the Homeric poems vs. the highly literate, scholarly, and allusive styles of Apollonius, Virgil and Lucan). As students look at these epics within the socio-historical contexts that produced them, they have the opportunity to consider epic poetry's impact within its own culture and its literary influence on literature in the Classical era as well as the western canon more generally.

### Required Texts:

Apollonius of Rhodes. *Jason and the Golden Fleece*. Trans. R. Hunter. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print. (ISBN: 9780199538720)

Homer. *The Iliad*. Trans. R. Fagles. New York: Penguin, 1991. Print. (ISBN: 9780140445923)

Lucan. *Civil War*. Trans. S. Braund. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print. (ISBN: 9780199540686)

Virgil. *The Aeneid*. Trans. R. Fagles. New York: Penguin, 2010. Print. (ISBN: 9780143106296)

### Outcomes

When you complete this course, the successful student will:

- Be familiar with the characters and plots of the epics of Homer, Apollonius, Virgil, and Lucan.
- Be able to discuss the influence of these classical epics on one another.
- Be able to appreciate the influence of these classical epics on later art and literature.
- Be able to discuss how these epics functioned within ancient society.

### Writing Outcomes:

Throughout the semester, students will develop their writing skills and practice using writing as a vehicle for critical thinking. This course is an approved writing course, and therefore upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage %
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### Assessment

Your grade will be determined by the following breakdown:

Participation	15%
Examinations	30%
Perseus Project Assignment	15%
Research Paper	20%
Reaction Papers	20%

### Course Requirements

#### Perseus Project Assignment:

The use of epithets is vital to understanding the oral formulae on which *aoidoi* oral poets depend. The use of epithets continues to be a mark of epic genre even once the poetry ceases to be composed orally. Students will choose a particular character from the *Iliad* and explore the epithets and oral formulae associated with that figure. Students will use the Perseus Project web-site ([www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu)) to search the *Iliad* for the occurrences of their particular character. A short (2-page) paper will be submitted discussing your observations. The First Draft of the paper will be workshopped in class on Monday, February 4. Final draft of assignment is due Monday, February 11.

#### Reaction Papers:

Writing is frequently a very effective tool in learning about a new subject. Reaction papers will serve as a tool to both facilitate discussion and begin to think about and learn about the various themes, topics, and meanings of epic poetry. Students will be required to write **six 2-page (double-spaced) papers on assigned topics**. These papers should include a clear thesis statement, argue a specific perspective responding to the assigned prompt and employ the text for evidence supporting the argument. Refer to the Reaction Paper handout for a full schedule of topics and due dates, basic information on proper source citation, and a rubric for grading. If discussion seems particularly sluggish, I may ask for several volunteers to read their responses

to the reading as a starting point for our discussion. **Reaction papers will be submitted via Moodle and will be due at 11:45 pm of the day listed on the syllabus.** Lowest score will be dropped.

#### Research Paper:

Students will be required to write a 6-page, thesis-driven paper on one of several suggested topics (e.g. the changing nature of the Hero, Homeric 'ethics,' epic as history). Students are encouraged to discuss with me ideas about (or problems with) their papers and even submit preliminary drafts. Students are required to submit paper topics to me on **Monday, March 4**. An outline of the paper is due **Friday, March 22**. The outline should reflect a significant step towards writing the paper, including a clear thesis statement, the ideas supporting the argument AND evidence establishing those ideas. A full draft of the paper is due Monday, April 15. This draft will be workshopped in peer revision groups, and submitted to the instructor for feedback. All preliminary steps are mandatory. The preliminary paper topic, outline, and all drafts, peer review worksheets, proofreading checklists must be submitted along with the final draft. Papers that fail to complete the preliminary stages will not be accepted. The final paper is Friday, April 26.

#### Quizzes and Tests:

Periodic reading quizzes, brief in-class writing assignments, and/or responses to discussion questions prepared in advance of class discussion.

Two essay examinations.

#### Expectations:

In addition to these written assignments, students are expected not only to attend but also to participate actively in class discussion. Repeated absences or tardiness will affect your grade. I expect you to make every effort to attend class. If you are unable to do so, please contact me; you are responsible for making any necessary arrangements for what you missed in class. Late papers will be penalized by one grade per day, unless prior arrangements have been made.

There will be a Moodle Course Supplement for this class. I will use this to make periodic announcements, to post copies of handouts and assignments, and to make various electronic resources available. Please note that I will also use Moodle to send email. The Moodle system requires the use of your university student email account; if you prefer to use a different account, you must set the university account to forward. Even if you do not login to the Moodle Supplement, you are expected to check your email regularly.

Although classical poets were not concerned about plagiarism, you are expected to use contemporary standards for citing sources. Whenever you refer to any idea that is not considered common knowledge – whether in a direct quotation or paraphrase – you must cite your source according to the MLA style sheet. If you have any questions or concerns regarding plagiarism, please ask.

**Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments:** All effort will be made to follow this schedule. I reserve the right to revise the schedule as necessary.

<b>Week One</b>		
Friday	1/11/19	Introductory Material: Saga, Folktale, Epic
Monday	1/14/19	The Bronze Age Reading: The Historian's Homer (Moodle)
Wednesday	1/16/19	Constructing an Argument: Prove that Agamemnon is Right! Reading: Iliad 1-2 Reaction #1
Friday	1/18/19	Helen on the Wall, Dual Paris and Menelaus; Gods in Homer Reading: Iliad 3-4
<b>Week Two</b>		
Monday	1/21/19	<b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day -- No Classes</b>
Wednesday	1/23/19	Oral Composition Theory  Reading: Selections from Singer of Tales (Moodle)
Friday	1/25/19	Dignity and Honor in a World of Brutality and Violence Reading: Iliad 5-6 Reaction #2
<b>Week Three</b>		
Monday	1/28/19	Homeric Epithet Assignment (Perseus Project)
Wednesday	1/30/19	The Trojan Perspective: Hector and Andromache Reading: Iliad 7-8
Friday	2/1/19	Atē and Responsibility Reading: Iliad 9-10

Week Four			
	Monday	2/4/19	<b>Peer Review Workshop</b> <b>First Draft of Perseus Project Paper Due</b>
	Wednesday	2/6/19	Momentary Victory's: Agamemnon's <i>Aristeia</i> vs Trojan Advance Reading: Iliad 11-12
	Friday	2/8/19	Gods and Mortals Reading: Iliad 13-14
Week Five			
	Monday	2/11/19	Storytelling: Patroclus Reading: Iliad 15-16 <b>Final Draft of Perseus Project Due</b>
	Wednesday	2/13/19	The Futility of War Reading: Iliad 17-18
	Friday	2/15/19	The Shield of Achilles Reading: Iliad 19-20 <b>Reaction #3</b>
Week Six			
	Monday	2/18/19	<b>Presidents' Day -- No Classes</b>
	Wednesday	2/20/19	Research Assignment: Finding a Topic
	Friday	2/22/19	Supernatural Intrusion into Epic Realism Reading: Iliad 21-22
Week Seven			
	Monday	2/25/19	Death, Grief, and Reconciliation Reading: Iliad 23-24
	Wednesday	2/27/19	Review and Discussion
	Friday	3/1/19	<b>Midterm Exam</b>

Week Eight			
	Monday	3/4/19	The Epic Cycle: <i>Iliou Persis, Nostoi</i> Reading: Selections from Fragments and Epitomes of Epic Cycle (Moodle) <b>Research Paper Topic Due</b>
	Wednesday	3/6/19	Odysseus' Return Reading: Selections from the Odyssey (Moodle)
	Friday	3/8/19	Odysseus' Return, Continued Reading: Selections from the Odyssey (Moodle)
Week Nine			
	Monday	3/11/19	The Hellenistic Age <b>Reaction #4</b> Research Assignment: Refining the Topic, Finding Sources
	Wednesday	3/13/19	Sources
	Friday	3/15/19	Heroism in the Hellenistic Age Reading: Argonautica 1
Week Ten			
	Monday	3/18/19	Epic Geography; Kreuzung der Gattungen Reading: Argonautica 2
	Wednesday	3/20/19	Epic Love Affair Reading: Argonautica 3
	Friday	3/22/19	Epic Journeys Reading: Argonautica 4 <b>Research Paper Outline Due</b>
Week Eleven			
	Monday	3/25/19	<b>Spring Break</b>
	Wednesday	3/27/19	<b>Spring Break</b>
	Friday	3/29/19	<b>Spring Break</b>
Week Twelve			
	Monday	4/1/19	Roman <i>Aemulatio</i> Reading: Aeneid 1-2
	Wednesday	4/3/19	Tragedy and Epic Reading: Aeneid 3-4
	Friday	4/5/19	Katabasis and Destiny Reading: Aeneid 5-6 <b>Research Paper Précis Due</b>

Week Thirteen			
	Monday	4/8/19	The Iliad in Rome Reading: Aeneid 7-8
	Wednesday	4/10/19	Images of Civil War Reading: Aeneid 9-10
	Friday	4/12/19	Virgil's Vision of Rome's Destiny Reading: Aeneid 11-12
Week Fourteen			
	Monday	4/15/19	Peer Review Workshop <b>Research Paper Draft Due</b>
	Wednesday	4/17/19	Mythologizing History: Anti-Aeneid Reading: Civil War 1-3
	Friday	4/19/19	Philosophical Epic: Stoicism Reading: Civil War 4-5
Week Fifteen			
	Monday	4/22/19	Katabasis Inverted: Dreams, Nightmares Reading: Civil War 6-8
	Wednesday	4/24/19	History, Legend, Myth Reading: Civil War 9-10
	Friday	4/26/19	Summary and Conclusions <b>Research Paper Final Draft Due</b>

**Final Exam: 3:20-5:20, Monday April 29**

### Email and Moodle:

This class will use a Moodle course supplement. Students will need to know their Net ID and associated password to access Moodle. All announcements concerning assignments, quizzes, events, etc. will be posted to Moodle and sent to university email accounts. Supplemental handouts will also be posted to Moodle. Please Note: Homework assignments will not generally be posted to Moodle. Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts or ensuring that any email sent to their university account is forwarded to their preferred account.

### Disability Accommodations:

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154



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or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

**Starfish:**

This course utilizes the Starfish Student Success Network. It is designed to promote student success through coordination and communication between students, instructors, and support staff. Throughout the term, you may receive emails regarding your attendance, course grades or academic performance. **To benefit, it is important that you check your umontana email regularly and take the recommended actions.** You may also be contacted directly by an Advisor or Campus Support Professional.